

## NEW PUBLICATIONS.

WILLIAM WINTER.

ENGLISH RAMBLES, and other Fugitive Pieces, in Prose and Verse. By WILLIAM WINTER. 16mo, pp. 173. James R. Osgood &amp; Co.

The ten chapters of a traveler's impressions which form about half this volume first appeared in the form of letters to *The Tribune*; the three pieces commemorative of Longfellow were also written for this journal, and the poems which fill out the collection "have hitherto," as the author says, "been wanderers" in various regions of periodical literature. Now that they are brought together in an attractive book they forcibly remind us how much beautiful and careful work is expended in the service of the modern newspaper, and what a fine literary quality belongs at any rate to the best of the brief essays, letters and verses which are laid every morning upon our breakfast tables, along with the news of politics and society, the courts and the markets. Mr. Winter's writings have not only the finish of style and the productions of thought which distinguish the best of the modern newspaper, but they have a marked individuality which is not common in the daily press. The tendency of the newspaper, as a disseminator of the news, is to be a mere record of the day's events, and to be content with the most superficial and uninteresting details. Mr. Winter's style is not a fashion of speech, but the expression of a matured character.

Mr. Winter's English Rambles are not like those of any other traveler. He belongs, as it has been well said, to the traditions of Irving, but only because, like Irving, he saw the most lovable side of England, and took it fast to his heart. The mood in which he wanders by English hedgerows, traces the haunts of Shakespeare, explores historic taverns and churches, muses in the London streets, and paces the courts and silent thoroughfares by night, is peculiar to himself. At least we know of nothing like it in books. There are certain poetical aspects of England which are better presented in those fascinating pages than we have ever seen them elsewhere. The descriptions never degenerate into catalogues; they are the record of impressions rather than an inventory of objects; but whoever has been through the same ground will recognize the extraordinary truthfulness of the picture of the English country. Nobody could set forth as vividly, in a few striking phrases, the "glimmers of green tree and shining river, of dense copses that cast their cool shadows on the moist and gleaming emerald soil, of long white roads that stretch away like ethereal aisles and of little church towers embowered in ivy, of thatched cottages draped with roses," as Mr. Winter does so deeply felt. He writes out of a full heart.

The poems included in this volume are full of the same delicate charm and clarity, always imaginative and suffused with feeling. "The Wrecker's Bell" and "Accomplices" show a dramatic force to which his taste does not allow him, although readers of his previous volumes will know that he is master of it. An introspective mood is more common with him; and in this temper his felicitous and musical lines sing of love, friendship, trust and peace. The sincerity to which we have referred as a characteristic of his literary work in general is conspicuous in these records of personal feeling, and of course it gives them a strong hold upon the sympathies of the reader. Sincerity is also a marked quality in the occasional pieces, such as the fine tributes to Longfellow, Macaulay, Barrett and Warren. It is because his feeling is so real and his poetical conception of the occasion so natural and correct that Mr. Winter always succeeds in poems of this class, where failure is so common.

## MODERN ESSAYS.

PROSE MASTERPIECES, from Modern Classics, 3 vols. 16mo, pp. vii, 355, 205, 325. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The anonymous editor of these pretty volumes, in presenting specimens of the best writers of essays, English and American, from Irving to the present day, has attempted to illustrate the characteristics of the several authors, as well as to select fine examples of English prose. He has also undertaken to group the papers, as far as practicable, "according to the connection of their subjects or the closeness of their authors' intellectual kinship." In certain cases this last named purpose has been well carried out. For example, the essays on history by Carlyle, Macaulay and Froude are happily placed together; and some other selections fall into an association which is less obvious, but at any rate natural. This idea of classification, however, is not really important, and we must admit that it has not been carried out with the care which it has taken the editor's choice—that he would have taken something like "The World of Books" if he had not been anxious to find a companion piece for Washington Irving's "The Mutability of Literature"; and that the specimens from Sydney Smith has controlled the specimens from Lander. Lander's "Petition of the Things" ought not to be here. It is neither a charming piece of English prose, nor a sample of Lander's highest achievement, nor in any sense one of his characteristic essays; and those who know Lander only from these volumes will have not even a glimpse of the qualities which give him such a remarkable place in English literature. When we think of some of the exquisite essays by which this great master of prose might have been exhibited, high poetical thought in language of perfect dignity and beauty, the choice of these spurious pieces seems melancholy indeed. Mr. E. A. Freeman's paper on "Race and Language" makes with Goldstone's on "Kin Beyond Sea"; but the claim of Mr. Freeman to any place in a collection of "the great modern writers of English prose" seems to us extremely doubtful. Mr. Freeman is a distinguished historian, in spite of an incorrect and ungraceful style—the style of a writer who is so intent upon driving his words into our memory and fixing them there, at whatever expense of time and trouble, that he can give no thought to literary polish. With Mr. Freeman this laxity of style, or perhaps we had better say this want of style, is a great blemish. He tires and provokes us, he is so prolix, so careless, so ugly.

Mr. John Morley, who is represented by a lecture delivered before the Midland Institute at Birmingham, shows how effective a composition can be shown without rhetorical arts. His address is destitute of literary ornament, and is disgraced by some little unconscious tricks of expression which belong to the platform style of the easy popular speaker, but it is so clear, so direct, so compact, so forcible, that every paragraph exactly fulfills its purpose. Our interest does not flag in reading; and we close the book with a perfectly distinct impression of the author's thought, and none at all of his style. That is as much as to say that he has a good practical working style, which is just what we should expect Mr. John Morley's style to be. Mr. Morley may be taken as a type of the modern progressive, independent, liberal, cultivated, utilitarian school; and a practical correct working style exactly suits the definite purposes of that school. Fitness for practical uses is the distinctive excellence of the style. But in turning over these pages we should be led to doubt whether the purely literary character is not fading out of the writing of our time, as literature it ceases to be the imaginative quality to become the servant of scientific investi-

gation, and polemics, and useful knowledge. The simple and delightful fancies of Irving, the quaint delicacy of Lamb, the composure of Emerson, the manly tenderness of Thackeray, the eloquence of Ruskin, the polished humor of Lowell, and the noble urbanity of Newman, belong to a literary period which has passed or is passing away. Nothing like the prose of these masters is cultivated at the present day. The new spirit, as we find it in contentions Stephen, in Proudhon, in Carlyle, and even in Matthew Arnold, whose fine taste is often betrayed by his critical and argumentative habit, is not favorable to the formation of a pure literary prose style.

## WILLIAMS'S MIDDLE KINGDOM.

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM. A Survey of the Geography, Government, Literature, Social Life, Arts and History of the Chinese Empire and its Inhabitants. By WILLIAM W. WILLIAMS. Revised edition, with illustrations and a new map of the Empire. In two volumes. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Few books are better entitled to a revised edition than Dr. Williams's "Middle Kingdom." For thirty-five years it remained at once the fullest, most accurate and most entertaining account of China, and though several ambitious works on the same subject have been printed during the past ten years, none of them surpassed this classic. But in thirty-five years so many changes have occurred, even in conservative China, that the most careful book must have stood in need of revision, and in fact Dr. Williams has found it necessary to increase the bulk of the original work about one-third, though he has sought to exclude all irrelevant and superfluous matter. Naturally the principal changes are connected with the revolutions of Chinese policy occurring during the past five-and-thirty years; and these have been so considerable, as regards the outside world, as to require thorough exposition. The author has not considered himself called upon to make any considerable modification of his original chapter on the Chinese census, although the data for accurate calculations are not accessible, while the estimates of foreigners have of late years tended to approximate more closely than before to his own. A chapter is given to the Tai-ping Rebellion, and another to recent events in China. The chapters on Chinese literature and upon the natural history of the country are fuller than in the first edition. Many new illustrations have been introduced, and especially should be noticed a new map of the Empire which appears to be very careful and accurate, though of course there must be much guess-work in any cartographic illustration of a country so imperfectly surveyed. The work in its new form comprises two large and handsome octavo volumes. The printers and publishers have done their part very creditably. In fact, the revised edition of the "Middle Kingdom" is the most ambitious and the best executed work, typographically speaking, that has issued for a long time from American presses. From a literary standpoint it must be regarded as the best general work on China extant, and therefore as indispensable to the reader who wishes to obtain a comprehensive view of the wonderful country and people it treats of.

AMERICAN COLLEGES: Their Students and Work. By CHARLES F. THWING. 16mo, pp. 213. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

This is a revised and enlarged edition of a practical and interesting little book which first appeared five years ago. Professor Thwing has made changes in nearly every page, has taken account of recent improvements in methods of instruction and courses of study, has brought down the statistical information to the latest dates, and has added three new chapters, on "Wealth and Endowment," "A National University," and "What an American Education." The figures presented in the first of these additions will probably surprise even those who have paid some attention to the subject. Professor Thwing does not favor the scheme for a National university, the objections to which he states very forcibly. The advocates of co-education will find strong support in the statements he has collected respecting the results of the system where it has thus far been tried.

ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS. By KATH FRIEDRICH-KROKER. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

This is a volume of fairy tales for children. It is almost difficult to say how far such productions meet, or fail to meet, the childish ideal. Certainly the delightful fun of "Alice" and "Through the Looking-Glass" ought to be within the scope of the average child's comprehension, and in fact experience has shown this to be the case. Whether these fantasies are adapted for dramatization, however, is quite another question, and one which we suppose can only be solved by an inspection of the publisher's books at the end of the holiday season. The book is very nicely printed and bound.

MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. From *The English Review*.

Mr. Matthew Arnold has been heartily welcomed in the United States, as he was certain to be, by the American public. He has been a welcome visitor, as a lecturer, and his lectures have been a source of great interest and pleasure. He has been a welcome visitor, as a lecturer, and his lectures have been a source of great interest and pleasure. He has been a welcome visitor, as a lecturer, and his lectures have been a source of great interest and pleasure.

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to use his influence to persuade it to enter political life more freely and frankly. The duty of educated and public-spirited citizens is to endeavor to win the nation to arbitrate between themselves and the rival minority, which treats the majority as a hermit cat treated as an unprovoked assailant.

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